



## *The President's Daily Brief*

*25 January 1973*

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*FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY*

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

25 January 1973

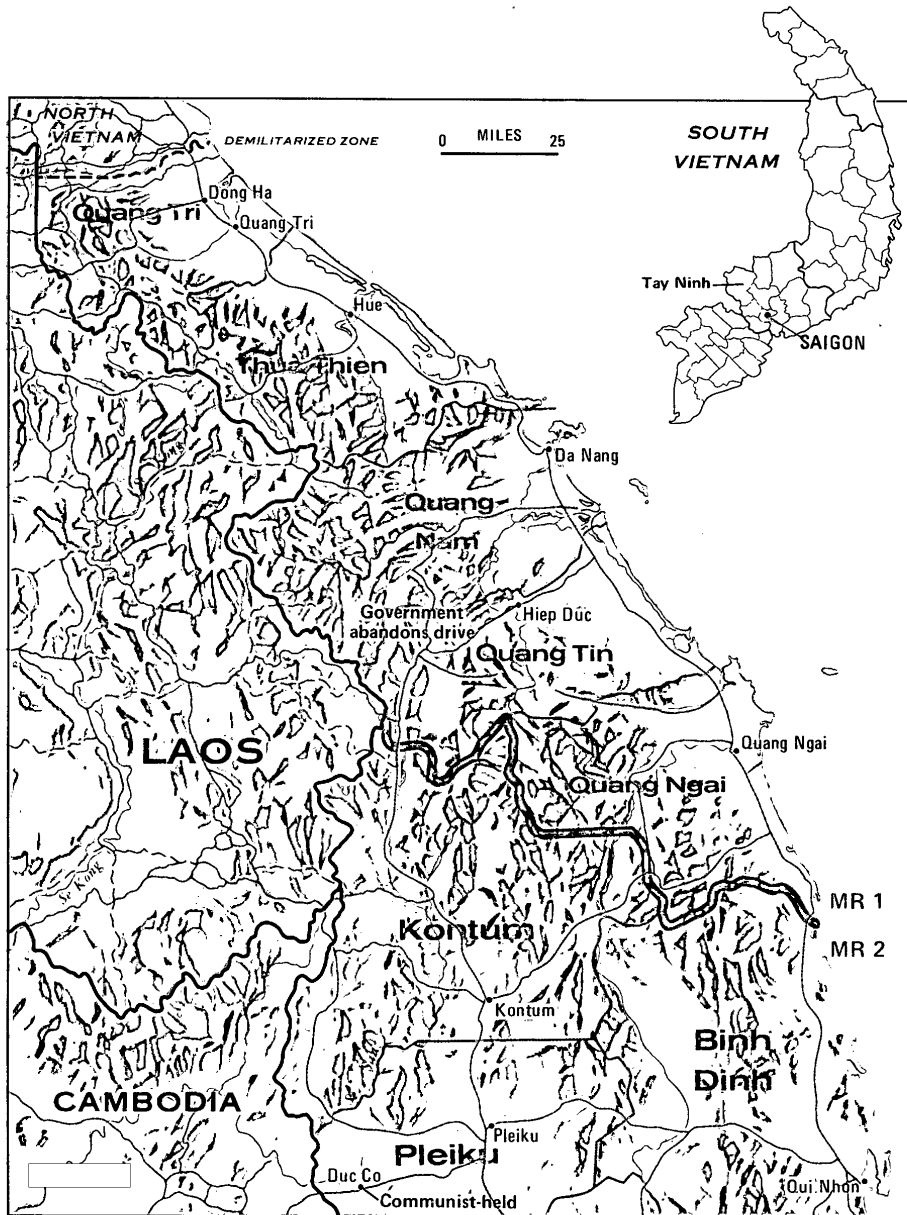
PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

In South Vietnam we have additional indications that the Communists will try to improve their military position before the cease-fire goes into effect, but so far their action has been mostly confined to harassment and light shelling. *(Page 1)*

The Thai Army is abandoning large-scale operations against Communist insurgents in favor of the use of small, specialized units directed against cadre and base camps. *(Page 2)*

Argentine military leaders have reaffirmed their support for President Lanusse and for proceeding with the electoral process, despite recent reports that they were pressing him to foreclose a Peronist victory. *(Page 3)*

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**SOUTH VIETNAM**

US military authorities in Saigon report that as of 0530 EST there has not been a significant increase in Communist military action, although we have additional indications that the Communists intend to try to improve their position on the ground before the cease-fire goes into effect. [redacted]

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[redacted] Communist officials have continued to meet in the past several days to disseminate orders to use small units to expand control of land and people.

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Except for a sharp clash in the western delta, most of the action remains limited to Communist harassment and light shelling. Some signs point to main force enemy attacks, possibly in an effort to capture a few district centers or even a provincial capital. [redacted] the North Vietnamese have been strengthening their forces in Tay Ninh Province northwest of Saigon and now have at least three regiments there, possibly with armor support.

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South Vietnamese forces have disrupted enemy staging and storage areas north of Saigon that would have been used in any push toward the capital itself, [redacted]

[redacted] In Military Region 1 the South Vietnamese apparently have abandoned their effort to retake the Hiep Duc district capital following a series of Communist counterattacks on Monday. In Pleiku Province the government forces lost Duc Co Ranger Camp earlier this week, and there are indications that the Communists will try to oust the government from scattered fire support bases in a largely Communist-controlled area north of the Kontum provincial capital.

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THAILAND

The Thai Army is abandoning large-scale sweep operations against Communist insurgents--which have been unsuccessful--and is opting instead to use small, specialized units. Future combat operations will be conducted largely by 12-man teams that will concentrate on identifying and eliminating Communist cadre and base camps.

*This decision against sustaining military pressure upon the Communists is another indication of Bangkok's reluctance to accept the casualties and expenditures required by an all-out effort. Over the long term, the development of small, well-trained units could improve the army's counterinsurgency performance. The immediate effect of the new strategy, however, will be to give the Communists welcome relief from military pressure and opportunity for further growth.*

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ARGENTINA

Signs of growing Peronist strength and unity in recent days, combined with a rising level of political violence, have revived the old anti-Peronist fears and hatreds within the armed forces. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] President Lanusse has been under growing pressure to take action that would foreclose a Peronist victory, even if it means postponing or canceling the elections scheduled for 11 March.

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Following meetings held yesterday, however, military leaders reaffirmed their support for Lanusse and for proceeding with the elections. Tighter controls are to be imposed on the candidates.

*Lanusse appears to have leaked accounts of his dismay over political trends in order to warn the Peronists to moderate their tactics as well as to obtain this pledge from the military. He is personally committed to returning the government to elected officials and is likely to do everything he can to keep to his promise and, at the same time, to keep the Peronists from winning.*

*If fear of a Peronist victory becomes overriding, however, we would expect Lanusse to step down and leave to someone else the unpleasant task of canceling the elections and dealing with the public outcry that would follow.*

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